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AUTHOR Mahan, James M.
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ABSTRACT

At Indiana University, preservice teachers participate in required community-based multicultural programs that allow them to become directly involved with community characteristics, values, needs, and achievements. It is hoped that this experience will help them to adapt curriculum and instructional techniques to fit community realities and aspirations. Three projects, located in American Indian reservations, Hispanic communities, and urban areas, provide preservice teachers with a variety of community activities. Each participant completes a prerequisite course focusing on the target cultural group before reporting for a 16- to 17-week assignment in the chosen community. Each project has its unique structure, but all preservice teachers must average at least 15 hours per week of nonschool teaching in the local community in addition to fulfilling student teaching requirements. Evaluation data collected over the nine years of the project's existence have indicated that structured, semester-long field experiences in cultural communities produce a significant, positive response from preservice teachers. Community members also express positive reactions to the program. Participants report that the field experience had direct application to their teaching practice and that it provided long term rewards. (FG)

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COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT COMPONENTS IN CULTURALLY - ORIENTED TEACHER PREPARATION

James M. Mahan
Indiana University-Bloomington

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NCATE papers (1977) emphasize the importance of practica and other field experiences in effective multicultural teacher preparation. Saville-Troike (1978) contends that cultural preparation of teachers should include trips into, and involvement with, various cultural and economic communities. Toelken (1976), focusing upon a specific cultural group, emphasizes how much can be learned if one looks thoughtfully at the Navajo world while actually living in a Navajo community.

For most preservice teachers, the student teaching assignment is the longest and most intense contact with teaching reality. However, this "reality" is often limited in scope to contact with pupils, teachers, principals, and a few parents who attend Parent Teacher Organization functions or who come to school for a conference over pupil achievement or deportment. There is a "community world" beyond the walls of the school shaped by economic, social, political, religious, cultural, and other forces too often unknown to the student teacher. One way to acquaint preservice teachers with the characteristics, values, needs, and achievements of the community which sponsors and supports the school is to supplement student teaching placements with required, non-school, community involvement assignments.

The objectives of this paper are to:

(a) identify some replicable community and community agency assignments currently functioning as integral parts of a student teaching semester.
(b) present longitudinal data reflecting participant acceptance in, reaction to, and evaluation of, community involvement assignments.
(c) illustrate the social and professional impact of community experiences upon student teachers as reflected in their subjective writings.
(d) encourage teacher educators to consider the inclusion of community assignments in all types of teacher preparation programs.

Background

Indiana University, for nine consecutive years, has implemented an American Indian Reservation Project, a Hispanic Community Project, and an Urban Project. Each preservice participant completes a prerequisite course focusing upon the target cultural group before reporting for a sixteen to seventeen week assignment in the cultural community. In addition to fulfilling student teaching requirements by instructing Native American, Hispanic, or Black students; the project participants must average at least fifteen hours per week in the performance of non-school teaching work in the local community. They are to meet and work directly with people from various walks of life and become acquainted with "how a living is made" in that community.

SP 020 184

Some of the assigned work is highly structured. For example, Hispanic and Urban Project participants are placed formally for forty hour work weeks in community social service agencies during the first five weeks of their student teaching semester. In week six, after classroom student teaching duties are assumed, the participants are still required to spend fifteen supplementary hours in a variety of less formal community (non-school) learning activities. The Reservation Project participants are not placed formally in social service agencies. There are fewer agencies on the Navajo and Hopi Reservations plus distances between agencies and living places preclude the agency assignments. However, a variety of formal and informal non-school activities totaling at least fifteen hours of non-teaching, community involvement per week are required on the Reservations.

Feasible Community Involvement Activities

A wide assortment of community activities in which preservice teachers can participate have emerged in Indianapolis, the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, in Arizona-Mexico border towns, and on the Navajo and Hopi Reservations. Similar opportunities exist in other locales, of course. List I presents some of the many viable and worthwhile activities engaged in over the years. This listing can be expanded by teacher educators who are currently requiring community work/learning experiences, and can be used as a starting point by those who desire to initiate community involvement components. List II indicates the functions of diverse social service agencies in which directors have been very willing to accept preservice teachers for a five week internship.

LIST I

Community Activities Included In A Student Teaching Semester

Hispanic and Urban Projects	Indian Reservation Project
* Community agency internship - 5 weeks	* Dormitory program assistant
* Aide in adult education - twice a week	* Student in adult education
* School board meeting attendance	* School board meeting attendance
* Town council meeting attendance	* Chapter House meeting attendance
* Attendance at cultural speeches/rallies	* Girl/boy scout assistant
* Festival preparation/attendance	* Bus route riding
* Interviews with community officials	* In-depth talk with adults
* Assisting migrant farm workers in the fields	* Visits to cultural centers
* In-depth talk with adults	* Attendance at ceremonials
* Visits to cultural centers	* Observation of jewelers/weavers
* Attendance at cultural ceremonies	* Dining at home of member of target cultural group
* Dining at home of member of cultural group	* Attendance at cultural fairs
* Volunteer church/civic work	* Assisting with sheep herding
* Attendance/communication at cultural fairs	* Babysitting for local families
* Tours of local industries	* Recreation program assistant
* Riding school bus routes	* Teaching/performing for community clubs/churches

LIST II

Types of Community Agency Activities Utilized

Rural Legal Aid
Family planning
Child adoption
Urban League
City development projects
Food stamps
Emergency housing
Senior Citizen programs
Community health
Family guidance and counseling
Migrant council program
Mayor's office civic projects
Juvenile detention center training
Employment/manpower projects
Meals-on-wheels programs
Library outreach programs
Door-to-door survey by newspaper
Salvation Army projects
Headstart
Association for the Blind projects
Migrant clinic
Parental liaison out of central school office

Why Require Community Involvement?

"What do you teach?" "I teach children, not a particular subject." This question and its answer are cliches in educational conversation. One must know a "subject" in order to teach it. Likewise, one must know "children" in order to teach "children." There is much to learn about children in any community -- much that affects their attitude toward school, determines what they will value and what they will reject, how they will use their non-school time, what future goals they deem feasible to seek, how they will react to classroom discipline, etc. Not everything can be learned about children from books. Parents, employment or unemployment, the home, neighborhood peers, tradition, physical needs, cultural values are all among the forces that shape a child's perception of, and involvement with, classroom teaching. Cultural identity plays an important part in how people view and react to the world, how they view themselves, and how they learn. It is essential that teachers serving a different cultural group than their own become highly knowledgeable concerning the culture, conditions, and aspirations of the people they teach -- for therein lies the key to understanding and communicating. Since the classroom is a contained, controlled environment where so many forces important to the learner are often hidden from, or unknown to, the teacher; the teacher needs to "go out there" and discover the non-school learnings of the child. Community folk and community events can be powerful teachers of teachers -- can help the young teacher to understand where community children "are at" and why. Sullivan (1974) while discussing multicultural teacher preparation states that both schools and the cultural community must be used to extend the university classroom. Hilliard (1974) points out that language courses and a culture course are not sufficient for teacher candidates; interactions with the people to be taught are the grist for preservice teacher learning. Community involvement is required in the Indian Reservation, Hispanic Community, and Urban Projects so that the student teachers will directly experience some of the life and culture of their students and parents and, hopefully, modify curriculum and instructional procedures to fit community realities and aspirations.

LIST III

Some Specific Reasons for Required Community Involvement For Student Teachers

* to develop knowledge of the housing patterns and conditions in the community
* to foster knowledge of employment/unemployment patterns in the community
* to acquaint the student teacher with social sub-groups -- who interacts with whom
* to introduce the student teacher to family structure and family activities
* to develop knowledge of the major social needs in the community and current remedies for those needs
* to facilitate discovery of the decision-makers and power-brokers in the community
* to expose the student teacher to lay person attitudes toward schools and teachers
* to expose the student teacher to lay person expectations for teachers (as opposed to the expectations of educators)
* to provide student teachers with opportunities to assess the responsiveness or unresponsiveness of economic, educational, political, and social institutions to the needs of the people of the community
* to change the self-concept of the student teacher from "a visitor in town" to "an informed resident of the community"
* to acquaint the student teacher with cultural values and life styles important to the community
* to make it possible for the student teacher to have friends, contacts, and some "street savvy" before taking a classroom
* to make the student teacher more aware of supplementary instructional resources -- speakers, agencies, libraries, museums, social welfare projects, films, etc.
* to acquaint student teachers with youth play patterns, work activities, peer groups, communication styles, etc.
* to promote direct observation of cultural behavior thereby enhancing cultural understanding
* to provide student teachers with a reality base from which to make their classroom instruction more culturally relevant
* to expose teachers to the daily use and relative importance of dominant languages and second languages -- and related language problems
* to make it possible for a teacher training institution to involve well qualified, non-certificated personnel in the preparation of preservice teachers

Participant Evaluation of Community Involvement Requirements

Do preservice teachers acknowledge that they benefit from community involvement requirements and enjoy completing them? Cultural involvement/synthesis reports are submitted eight times per semester (biweekly) by Indian Reservation and Hispanic Community Project participants and five times per semester by Urban Project participants. As a part of each cultural report, the participants evaluate certain aspects of the community involvement assignments. The survey items and tabular data that follow are based on the multiple responses each semester of all the project participants over a nine year period. The mean scores presented indicate that preservice teachers do accept community assignments, do benefit from them, are accepted into them by the local people, and do enjoy and value the experiences.

SURVEY I

Items Relating to the Feasibility of Community Involvement Components in Culturally-Oriented Teacher Preparation

(a) Is it truly possible to do meaningful community work at your placement site?
seems impossible 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 very possible

(b) Does your community work put you in contact with adults from the target cultural group?
promotes no contact 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 promotes extensive contact

(c) Do you feel accepted, wanted, and appreciated in your placement community?
feel rejected 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 feel very accepted

(d) How valuable to you are these community involvement experiences?
worthless 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 valuable

Table I

Mean Scores: Community Involvement Feasibility Items

Time Span		Item	Project Group: Native American $\bar{X}$	N	Hispanic $\bar{X}$	N	Urban $\bar{X}$	N
9/72-5/75	a	feasible work	5.4		5.8		5.8	
	b	adult contact	4.9	78	6.1	41	5.6	21
	c	personal acceptance	5.6		5.8		5.7	
	d	value	6.2		6.0		5.8	
9/75-5/78	a	feasible work	6.2		6.2		5.9	
	b	adult contact	5.8	65	6.4	57	5.4	53
	c	personal acceptance	5.8		6.4		5.6	
	d	value	6.7		6.3		5.4	
9/78-5/81	a	feasible work	6.0		6.1		5.8	
	b	adult contact	5.7	150	6.3	54	5.8	39
	c	personal acceptance	5.9		6.1		5.8	
	d	value	6.5		6.4		5.7	

Notes: 8 responses x 293 participants = 2344 raw scores per each item for Reservation Project

8 x 152 participants = 1216 raw scores per each item for for Hispanic Project

5 x 113 participants = 565 raw scores per each item for Urban Project

SURVEY II

Items Relating to the Outcomes of Community Involvement Components in Culturally-Oriented Teacher Preparation

(a) How applicable are your community involvement assignments to the act of classroom teaching?
not applicable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 very applicable

(b) Will your community involvement better prepare you to promote cultural pluralism in the classroom?
will not help 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 will help greatly

(c) How helpful are your community involvement assignments in promoting cultural understanding?
no help 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 very helpful

(d) How valuable are your community involvement activities in facilitating friendship-making?
of no value 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 of great value

(e) How much are you enjoying your community involvement assignments?
not enjoying 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 enjoying thoroughly

Table II

Mean Scores: Community Involvement Outcome Items

Time Span		Item	Project Group: Native American X	N	Hispanic X	N	Urban X	N
9/72-5/75	a	classroom application	5.5		5.6		5.3	
	b	promotion of pluralism	5.9		5.8		5.6	
	c	foster understanding	6.5	78	6.1	41	5.6	21
	d	friendship conducive	6.5		5.9		6.1	
	e	enjoyment	6.3		6.2		5.3	
9/75-5/78	a	classroom application	6.2		5.7		4.6	
	b	promotion of pluralism	6.2		6.4		5.7	
	c	foster understanding	6.3	65	6.3	57	5.3	53
	d	friendship conducive	6.3		6.6		5.5	
	e	enjoyment	6.6		6.6		5.4	
9/78-5/81	a	classroom application	6.0		5.6		5.1	
	b	promotion of pluralism	6.4		6.1		5.6	
	c	foster understanding	6.5	150	6.5	57	5.5	39
	d	friendship conducive	6.2		6.3		5.9	
	e	enjoyment	6.6		6.6		5.2	

Tables I and II reveal positive evaluations by the student teachers of community involvement feasibility and of the outcomes of community involvement. The Reservation and Hispanic Project participants tend to be more positive about their community experiences than do the Urban Project participants. It should be noted that the Urban Project participants were not required to live in the urban community. Nightly they journeyed home to suburbia or wherever. Thus opportunities to informally socialize with urban Blacks were greatly reduced. The other two groups of participants lived at all times with Native American or Hispanic people, did not commute from anywhere, and regularly engaged in the local social and cultural events. It should also be noted that mean evaluative scores on most items for the Reservation and Hispanic groups tended to be lower for the 1972-75 period than they were for the 1975-78 and 1978-81 periods. It takes some time for the faculty of cultural field projects to identify productive social service agencies, meet key people in the various cultural settings, compile lists of activities in which participants can engage, choose cultural readings and films that facilitate community work, prepare guidelines for interaction at each site, etc. In other words, as the faculty became more knowledgeable about each community, its agencies, its events, its leaders, etc., it made more structured placements in more productive activities and provided more advice about "how to get started upon arrival."

In addition to responding to Likert-scale type evaluative items, project participants wrote adjectives describing each of several aspects of their cultural community experience. Three adjectives were associated with each aspect every time a cultural involvement and synthesis report was submitted. Project staff members classify and tally these adjectives as "positive" or "negative" upon receipt of the reports and keep summaries from year-to-year. Table III clearly indicates that the student teachers do enjoy life and the people in their cultural placement site. The only exceptions are the slightly negative views of the Urban participants toward the geographical/physical characteristics of the inner city.

Table III

Adjectival Evaluation By Student Teachers of Aspects of Community Involvement Experiences

Project Aspect	Percent of Evaluative Adjectives Classified "Positive"		
	Native American (24 x 293 = 7032 responses)	Hispanic (24 x 152 = 3648 responses)	Urban (15 x 113 = 1695 responses)
Contact with adults	87%	90%	81%
Community involvement	88%	89%	no data
Living conditions	75%	82%	85%*
Geographical area	83%	84%	48%
Social life	86%	88%	no data

*Many of these student teachers lived in suburbia and commuted to their agencies and schools.

A major goal of a cultural immersion teacher preparation program can be to forge a few close friendships between a preservice teacher and members of a cultural group that the teacher had not previously known, understood, or been in contact with in the past. Reservation and Hispanic Project participants eight times per semester responded to this survey question. "Please name any person (who is a member of the target cultural group) who knows you as a person, who cares about you, whom you consider a good friend, etc. You are not obligated to name someone each time -- name only those persons you truly consider close friends."

Table IV

Close Friendships Made With Members of Target Cultural Group During Full Semester In Placement Site

Project Group	Average Number of Friends Reported Per Participant					
	75-76	76-77	77-78	78-79	79-80	80-81
Native American	4.0	4.0	7.2	7.0	5.3	6.1
Latino	6.6	5.5	10.0	7.8	8.3	9.3

Table IV reveals that project participants do become friends with several people from the target cultural group. Although the mean scores fluctuate annually, more friendships have been made in each project in the most recent years. It should be noted that the student teachers involved had no close Native American or Hispanic friends before they left campus for their cultural placement sites. Four or more close Native American or Hispanic friends is rather impressive -- probably more than a great many inservice teachers in the nation can claim.

Community People Evaluate Involvement of Preservice Teachers in the Community

Project participants periodically list close friends made. Do these community friends really hold positive views of the student teacher? Between September, 1972 and May, 1975 each Hispanic Project participant averaged listing 6.2 close friendships formed. Surveys were mailed to about 250 of the Hispanic people so listed. Over 60% of the survey recipients responded. Table V summarizes the very positive attitudes these Hispanic community people held toward the preservice teachers as individuals and toward their involvement in community work. The data suggest that teacher educators and preservice teachers can optimistically expect to find acceptance and appreciation in the offices and homes of a placement community.

Table V

Response of Community Members to Involvement of Preservice Teachers in Community Activities

Survey Question	Percent of Highly Positive Responses
Respondents identifying themselves as Mexican American	91%
Respondents identifying the student teacher as a friend	82%
Respondents stating they would still recognize the student in three years and would eagerly extend an invitation to reminisce	91%
Respondents stating that people who want to be teachers should learn about the community by working with adults through community agencies	94%
Respondents stating the student teachers were of valuable service to the community via the agency	92%
Respondents stating the student teachers were helpful to them personally	88%

One Mexican American client of an agency wrote:

> "I believe that all universities ought to have similar programs so that teachers might be better prepared, not only to deal with students of their own background and age, but to go out into communities completely different than their own."

Representative Participant Comments on the Value of Community Involvement

Project participants have open-ended opportunities to evaluate their total cultural project experience at the end of the placement semester. The following quotations from participants support the concention that community people and community work assignments can be potent teachers of young educators.

* Through my talks and work with community people here, I have gained a much greater insight into the problems pupils face when they are caught between the Navajo and Anglo culture.
* Here in the community, I have seen how important a child's culture really is. Teachers need to learn how other cultural groups live and how they express themselves in and out of school.
* I used to be very selfish, but the Navajo people I work with have somehow changed that part of me.
* Working in this community has taught me that I am capable of things I never thought I could do. My view of others has changed as well. You must accept people, no matter how different, as they are. You cannot change people to suit your standards.

* After several Navajo people have shared their points of view with me, I have changed some of my ideas on government, man, marriage, family ties, and teaching.
* By learning to work with community problems here, I think I am now better able to work with any problem a student from any cultural group might face.
* My experiences in this community have helped me to understand what it means to be a "minority."
* The best way to learn out here is to get out of your room and volunteer your help to everyone. There is so much to learn from everyone no matter from what walk of life.
* After four months I am beginning to envision "what is possible" for this community. I better understand what is in the community and how various aspects relate -- church, school, business, home, entertainment.
* Through my work I have developed a sensitivity toward the people's cultural heritage and an awareness of the current issues and problems affecting their daily lives.
* My assignments have enabled me to learn about home life, religious beliefs, arts and crafts, and personal relationships.
* The contact with the community people and agency staff made every situation a new learning experience.
* Through community work I came into direct contact with pressing social problems and conditions that I previously considered to be vague and distant.
* My community involvement has allowed me to see the strength common values can bring to a community (unity and direction) and also the limitations they can inflict (seclusion and conservatism). As I asked people "why", "how", "when", "how often" I realized that I had never asked myself those big questions. My answers would make me different in their eyes, too.
* Working in another culture has helped me to recognize the commonalities in humans, and to identify those commonalities which should be focused upon in the classroom.
* My community experiences have convinced me that all people are atypical. Stereotypes are harmful at worst, useless at best, and unacceptable.

Conclusion

Evaluation of data collected over nine years indicates that structured, semester-long field experiences in cultural communities produces a significant, positive response from preservice teachers. Participants report a high degree of personal acceptance by community members. They also indicate very positive attitudes in regard to their own ability to work effectively in such settings. In addition, student teachers report making valuable friendships among members of the target cultural group. During the years when community members were surveyed regarding their contact with preservice teachers, eighty-two percent confirmed that real friendships had been made. Ninety-two percent verified that the student teachers were performing a valuable service through their community work.

Perhaps most encouraging is the data related to classroom outcomes of community involvement experiences. To a high degree, preservice teachers report that their community work has direct application to teaching and that it will

help them to promote cultural pluralism and understanding in their classrooms. Open-ended comments from participants suggest that many of them have gained remarkable insights into themselves and others as a direct result of their community experience.

It must be pointed out, however, that the positive outcomes obtained are the result of carefully planned preservice training and site development. Such cultural immersion practica cannot be fully successful without the investment of considerable time and effort. The personnel of the preservice training component should have background knowledge of the cultures of the target communities as well as experience teaching and working in culturally diverse settings. Staff time must be dedicated to research of the current literature related to the target cultures and to the preparation of preservice course content. Time must also be invested in planning preservice seminars and workshops. Travel to community sites is essential in order to develop contacts in community agencies and to identify community members who may serve as resource persons. Adequate provisions must also be made for on-site supervision of students while they are engaged in community work.

Like other effective educational efforts, community-based multicultural teacher training requires hard work and careful planning. Longitudinal data suggest that the rewards of this endeavor can be seen in participants who are prepared to carry their new self-knowledge and cultural understanding into their own families, social groups, classrooms, and communities.

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